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RTGS PAYMENT FACILITY NOW AVAILABLE ROUND THE CLOCK

At midnight, India became one of the few countries to operate the Real-Time Gross Settlement System (RTGS) 24X7

WILL PROVIDE FLEXIBILITY FOR BUSINESSES: RBI

A round-the-clock RTGS facility is expected to provide a major push for digital transactions in India. "It will provide extended flexibility to businesses for effecting payments and will enable introduction of additional settlement cycles in ancillary payment systems," the central bank said. It comes a year after NEFT facility was made available 24X7

'BOOST FOR FINANCIAL MARKET OPERATIONS'

- The RBI said the new facility will also enhance the operations of India's financial markets and international payments
- RTGS is a digital transaction mechanism intended for large-value instantaneous money transfers. At present, it handles about 6.35 lakh transactions daily, worth ₹4.17 lakh crore across 237 banks

₹57.96L

AVERAGE TICKET SIZE FOR RTGS IN NOVEMBER 2020

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Farmers prevented from proceeding along a highway on the Haryana-Rajasthan border as they were marching to Delhi, in Rewari district on Sunday | SHEKHAR YADAV

Delhi-Jaipur highway blocked by protesters

Day-long hunger strike today; Tomar meets Amit Shah; SC to hear plea on Wednesday

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi/Jaipur/Chandigarh

SECURITY was beefed up at several border points in Delhi on Sunday with the police deploying more personnel and placing multi-layered barricades in the wake of the ongoing farmers' protest, which is likely to intensify further in the coming days.

As the protest entered Day 18, farmers reiterated their plan to by and by block all major highways intersecting Delhi. The Jaipur-Delhi highway was blocked on Sunday, which created an hours-long traffic jam. Despite some efforts to reopen the route, the highway remained blocked for most part of the day and traffic was diverted near Behrod in Rajasthan. Next up is a hunger strike by farmers from 8 am to 5 pm on Monday. Not to be left out, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said he, too, will observe a day-long fast, which was promptly described as theatrics by his Punjab counterpart Amarinder Singh.

Near Shahjahanpur town on the Rajasthan-Haryana border, hundreds of farmers on Sunday started a protest march to Delhi, following a call by the All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee.

As for the Centre, Union ministers Narendra Singh Tomar and Som Parkash held yet another round of meeting with home minister Amit Shah. Sources said the government is firm on not repealing the three contentious farm sector reform laws but is willing to make adjustments and continue talks with farmers.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court will on Wednesday hear a plea seeking a direction to authorities to evict the farmers, saying commuters are facing hardships as they have blocked entry points into Delhi. Also, the gatherings could result in a spike in Covid-19 cases, the petition said.

MORE REPORTS: P9

TOMAR BLAMES IT ON OPPOSITION PARTIES

Union agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Sunday accused Opposition parties of running a propaganda war against the new farm laws, adding that these pieces of legislation "may cause difficulty for some in the short term" but will be beneficial in the long run

After 'fruitful' talks, sudden twist; strike continues

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

AS the state transport corporation employees strike entered the fourth day on Sunday, it was a day of high drama, swinging from almost reaching an agreement to end the agitation to further intensifying the strike.

Deputy Chief Minister and Transport Minister Laxman Savadi, Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai and Revenue Minister R Ashoka held a series of meetings with employee's union representatives and agreed to consider most of their demands, except that of granting them the status on par with state government employees.

After the meetings with the ministers, employee's union representative Chandru said they were satisfied with the discussions as the government had agreed to consider most of their demands.

Bus services resumed in some places after ministers and employee's union representatives jointly spoke to the media at Vidhana Soudha in the evening and expressed satisfaction with the talks.

A police officer escorts a woman at a bus station in Bengaluru during the ongoing transport strike | SHIVAKUMAR

However, in a major twist late in the evening, after holding discussions with other leaders of the union at Freedom Park (the protest venue), Chandru announced that talks had been incomplete and there is a need for further discussion. Farmers' association leader Kodihalli Chandrashekar, who is spearheading the protest, said the strike will continue even on Monday. Private bus operators' associations, too, extended support to employees of transport corporations and buses are likely to remain off the road on Monday.

Shocked by the sudden change in stance by the employees' union representatives, the government hit out at Chandrashekar and accused him of blackmailing and misleading the employees. P4

D-DAY TODAY

GOVT TO SUBMIT VIDYAGAMA REPORT TO HC

PEARL MARIA D'SOUZA @Bengaluru

THE government will submit its report on the feasibility of Vidyagama programme to the Karnataka High Court on Monday.

This follows a PIL filed in the court about the educational continuity of students in government schools.

The report consists of the opinions of DDPIs in the state, which as per sources in the know, are for the resumption of the programme. The positive response also comes in the backdrop of reducing number of Covid-19 cases, the sources added.

Vidyagama was stopped abruptly in mid-October after teachers and students complained of spike in Covid-19 cases.

The education department had sought the feedback from officials, including the DDPIs, on November 8. According to sources, officials have expressed the need to reopen schools, and the government is preparing to restart its flagship scheme that helped students studying in government schools.

Teachers' associations too are of the opinion that the programme must be resumed but within the premises of schools, instead of holding it in playgrounds in the open. P5

EXPRESS READ

Campus Front leader funded journo's Hathras trip

Kochi: Investigators say Campus Front of India leader K A Rauf Sherif, arrested by the ED on Saturday, funded the trip by PFI activists, including journalist Sidhique Kappan, to Hathras, with the intention of inciting communal riots. P7

WITH THIS ISSUE — THE ESSENTIAL CAMPUS DIGEST edex — 36 PAGES, INCLUDING 16 OF edex (TABLOID) & 4 of City Express

On health graph, rural K'taka ticks low

KANJANI MADHAVAN & IFFATH FATHIMA @Bengaluru

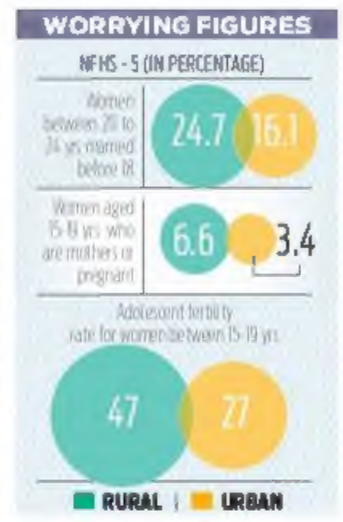
RURAL Karnataka has fared worse than urban parts of the state in multiple factors of the National Family Health Survey - 5, released by the Union Government on Saturday, with the data collected between July 10, 2019 and December 11, 2019.

In sex ratio for children born over the last five years, child marriage, pregnancy, fertility among minors, under five mortality, maternal health, nutrition among children and anaemia among men, women and children, the state's rural areas have done poorly.

"Policymaking in healthcare is centralised around big hospitals in cities. Because of this, villagers have to travel to big cities. They spend from their own pocket and if their cases are complicated, their treatment is often left out of free health care government schemes. We need a three-tier system, starting with a self-sufficient Primary Health Centre and trained doctors in rural areas," said Sylvia Karpagam, public health doctor and researcher.

Nutrition status

Children under three years being breastfed under one hour of birth has gone down from 56.3 per cent to 49.1 per cent. It is worrisome in rural areas at 47.5 per cent and better off in urban areas with 51.8 per cent. Children aged 6 to 8 months receiving solid or semi-solid food and breast milk has reduced from 46 per cent to 45.8 per cent and is worse in rural areas at 43.6 per cent and in urban areas it is at 50.4 per cent. P5



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Opt 2 5 % of Sum Assured 75 % of Sum Assured
Opt 3 10 % of Sum Assured 50 % of Sum Assured
Opt 4 15 % of Sum Assured 25 % of Sum Assured
SALIENT FEATURES
• Minimum Basic Sum Assured : ₹75,000
• Maximum Basic Sum Assured : No Limit
• Minimum Age at entry for Life Assured : 90 days (Completed)
• Maximum Age at entry for Life Assured : 12 yrs (Completed)
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• Premium Paying Term : (20 – age at entry) years
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THE DAY AFTER

128 arrested for rampage at iPhone unit

V VELAYUDHAM @Kolar

IN all, 128 workers have been arrested for vandalising the office premises of Wistron Corporation at Narasapura in Kolar on Saturday.

Kolar Superintendent of Police Karthick Reddy said that four cases have been registered and of them, three are by the company that manufactures iPhones, while the other is by the police for obstructing them while performing their duty.

Senior police officers, including Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order) Pratap Reddy and Central Range Inspector General of Police Semanth Kumar Singh, visited the company premises on Sunday.

The arrests have been made after going through the video footage that has gone viral on social media sites, video feeds from the company premises and a detailed inquiry, the SP said. P5

How govt got Council reconvened

BANSY KALAPPA @Bengaluru

LAW and Parliamentary Affairs Minister J C Madhu Swamy has managed to get the Legislative Council reconvened after it was adjourned sine die last week, which is unprecedented. He told *The New Indian Express* that he wrote to Governor Vajubhai Vala on Friday, the day after Council Chairman Prathap Chandra Shetty ended the session.

"I requested the Governor that the House can be reconvened under Rule 170, and asked him to continue with the session. The decision to prorogue the House was not that of the government and it was not what we discussed at the Business Advisory Committee meeting," he said.

The session will be held on Tuesday and the government is going to table the no-confidence motion against Shetty. P4

BREEDING PLAN

'Tiger of water' needs protection

BOSKY KHANNA @Bengaluru

LOOKS like where there is a gill, there is a way. The humpbacked mahseer, a large freshwater fish and found only in the Cauvery river basin, is critically endangered. Now, to protect this native species, the Karnataka Forest Department has partnered with Karnataka Fisheries Development Corporation to breed it.

This fish, known to grow up to 1.5 metres in length and weigh about 55 kg, is also known as the 'Tiger of the water' due to the fight it puts up.

It is threatened due to increased fishing and introduction of other foreign fish species. Realising the role of the mighty mahseer in the ecosystem, the forest department has decided to protect it. However, the fisheries department is still sceptical whether they are native species. To address the issues and to decide the next course of action, the two departments are holding a meeting on December 19. The fisheries department in Harangi is already working on breeding blue-finned mahseer in farms. P7

The humpbacked mahseer is known to grow up to 1.5 metres in length, weighing about 55 kg